

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed June 4, 2004 has been reviewed and the comments of the Patent and Trademark Office have been considered. Claims 1-24 were pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 6-11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 24 have been amended and no claims have been cancelled or newly added. Therefore, claims 1-24 are pending in the application and are submitted for reconsideration.

This amendment changes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, are presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In reply, applicants have amended claim 24 to address this rejection and believe that pending claim 24 is now in definite form and meets the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

In the Office Action, claims 1-12, 15-18, 20, 21, 23, and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Mehra et al. article "Designing a flexible services-based architecture for Internet Applications" (hereafter "Mehra") in view of the Singh article "Unifying Heterogeneous Information Models" (hereafter "Singh"). Claims 13, 14, 19, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mehra and Singh as applied to claims 1 and 20 above, and further in view of U.S. patent 6,434,555 to Frolund et al. (hereafter "Frolund"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Each of the independent claims 1, 19, 20, and 24 recite an apparatus, method, or software for interfacing between front-end data processing systems and back-end data processing systems wherein the interface comprises several layers with specifically recited features that best isolates changes between the several layers. In particular, each of the independent claims recite that the engine (that receives the message from the front end system) (1) uses a process map to select among a plurality of nodes (that contain business logic) and (2) the engine does not contain any business logic. In this way, the claimed system and method isolates the business logic to the process map and the nodes in the node layer.

See, for example, page 8, lines 4-5 of the specification. These recited features are not disclosed or suggested by the applied prior art.

Specifically, as acknowledged in the office action (in paragraph 7 of the Office Action), the context processor of *Mehra* (which interfaces with the front-end system) does not use any process map to select one (or more) of business logic nodes from a plurality of such nodes. To cure this deficiency in *Mehra*, the Office Action states (in paragraph 8) that *Singh* uses metainformation to decompose complex queries and route these requests to appropriate sources. However, this metainformation is only a method of resolving semantic mismatches between a request and different information providers. See page 40, first paragraph in the Architecture section of *Singh*. There is no teaching or suggestion of the claimed use of a process map (by a engine that interfaces to a front end system and includes no business logic) which determines which business logic node (from a plurality of such nodes) are selected. The claimed selected node then interface with back-end systems so that the business processes corresponding to the selected nodes can be provided by the corresponding back end systems. None of these claimed features is disclosed by either *Mehra* or *Singh*. Neither is *Frolund* relevant to these claimed features.

Accordingly, the Office Action fails to make a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to the pending claims. Therefore, the pending independent claims are believed to be patentable over the applied prior art.

The dependent claims are also in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons, as discussed above, as the independent claims on which they ultimately depend. In addition, they recite additional patentable features when considered as a whole.

For example, claims 2-4 recite dynamically creating the process map based on the exposed business logic capabilities of the nodes at the node layer. Such a dynamic creation of the process map is also not disclosed or suggested by the applied prior art and provides additional reasons for the patentability of these claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully request entry and consideration of the instant amendment and reply because it is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding the application, or if an examiner's amendment would facilitate the allowance of one or more of the claims, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper, or if a petition for extension of time is required for timely acceptance of same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account No. 19-0741 for any such fees; and applicants hereby petition for any needed extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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FOLEY & LARDNER LLP

Customer Number: 22428

Telephone: (202) 672-5414

Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By Aaron C. Chatterjee

William T. Ellis

Registration No. 26,874

Aaron C. Chatterjee

Registration No. 41,398

Attorneys for Applicants